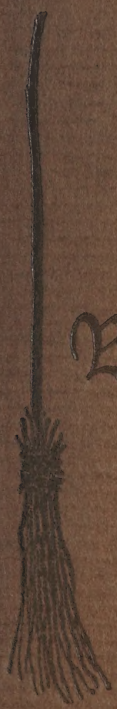
Letters to a young House keeper



By Jane Prince

O. P. Sent to R. R. L. 10/1/26

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LETTERS TO A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER

Letters to a Young Housekeeper

BY

Jane Prince

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TO

MY SISTER

AT WHOSE SUGGESTION THESE LETTERS
WERE WRITTEN FOR SOME
YOUNG FRIENDS

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LETTERS TO A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER

CHAPTER I · ECONOMY IN THE HOUSEHOLD

Dear Penelope:

You have no idea how your plaintive little "wail" in the form of a letter went right to my heart, or what memories long forgotten it brought back to me of my early married life. You are perfectly right in thinking that I too had my "experiences," and I am so pleased that you came to me to see if I could help you by recalling what I actually went through myself and what those "experiences," almost tragic to me at the time, brought about in the way of remedies.

I have no doubt that it will seem "like a leaf out of your own book" when I tell you that when we began housekeeping I started, as a matter of course, in about the same way of living that I had been accustomed to in my mother's house. This

was my standard and I knew no other. What was my horror to find, when the end of the month came, that I was taking so much for table expenses that we had little left for anything else. This discovery nearly reduced me to tears, for we had both been brought up as you have, with a great dread of living beyond our means.

Our first thought was to move into a house with lower rent, but, after considering the question from all points of view, we decided to remain where we were and find some other way of cutting down our expenses. This was a difficult problem for any one so inexperienced and who had never had to think much about economy, but it was the very same problem that you are facing in very much the same way, and I did just what you are doing, consulted a friend in whom

we had confidence and who had had years of experience. This consultation encouraged me to feel that there were many changes I could make in our way of living, and I was honestly amazed to find how much that seemed necessary for the table, just because I had always been accustomed to it, was not necessary at all, but that one was quite as well off without it.

I came home full of enthusiasm to see what I could do. Then came a serious settling down to the subject and a careful looking into ways and means. Together my husband and I talked over his income and decided what proportion we should allow for the table. The next month was to be a practice month, carefully watching how the money went, in order to make a plan for other months. How interesting it seemed! It meant that

I had a vocation as well as my husband; that, by careful thought, I could make him feel that it was worth while to work hard if what he earned went just as far as it could and if when he came home tired he found my part attended to so well that the home was comfortable and serene. For why, if he went faithfully to his business daily, as a matter of course, in order to give me the wherewithal to run the house, should not I do my part as seriously and faithfully?

From that time economy and the management of the household took a new interest, and what had been drudgery became a fascinating puzzle. I plunged into the study of good cookery books, learning all I could about the different cuts of meat, how to tell good fowl, etc., so that I could choose well and make the money go as far as possible. In this search I

discovered that the cheaper cuts of meat are sometimes the most nourishing and can be made tender by long cooking and very palatable in various ways. I also learned a great many different receipts for cooking the less expensive vegetables and serving them in an attractive way to give variety with the least expense.

I then started with my practice month in this way: I bought groceries in small quantities, only as much as we needed for a few days at a time, asking the price of things and keeping an account of them to check off with the bill when it came at the end of the month. Bills are a torment with a small income, so, while I found the bills for staple groceries, ice, and milk almost a necessity, I paid cash for all other articles of food; that is, meat, vegetables, fish, eggs, butter, etc. I went to market two or three times a week buy-

ing and paying for everything on the spot and seeing everything weighed and measured that was sold in that way. At the end of this practice month I made a list of what we had used in groceries, ice, and milk, and also added together all the cash spent on the other articles of food. With the grocery list in hand, at the beginning of the second month, I laid in a complete supply of groceries for the whole month, keeping it in a storeroom and giving out each morning enough for the day's needs. Of course some months we used a little more, some a little less, but it averaged pretty even and was a good guide. I laid in laundry soap by the box, because to keep a box ahead, if you can, is the best economy, for it lasts twice as long if it is stacked on shelves with spaces between the cakes so that it can dry thoroughly before using.

The amount of groceries, milk, and ice we should use per month having been decided upon as nearly as I could, we divided the *cash* I had spent on the other food during this practice month by 30, to see what allowance this would give me per day. Then, when I went to market I took with me in my marketing purse only the exact sum we allowed for the number of days for which I was marketing. Otherwise I felt sure I should spend too much, as the markets are so tempting and human nature so frail!

Luxuries we did not have; we were young and did not need them and we have never regretted that we saved them in order to have them in our old age. Finding fancy groceries expensive, I did not buy them, but tried to put the money we had allowed ourselves for the table into nutritious food. Before going to mar-

ket I used to make a rough outline ahead of the meals and take with me a list of what was needed for them. One is much more apt to have variety by thinking ahead, and taking a list to market is an economy, for, while one may change it after getting there, and substitute one article of food for another, still there is less likelihood of getting unnecessary things.

Money spent on a few good cookery books is well spent, for without their suggestions one is apt to fall into a rut, and this the family cannot forgive. No cook left to herself does her best. She needs constant supervision; to be told, "a little more salt here," "more sugar there," "slower cooking," etc., and also to be praised for what is good. If the praise is not given, the cook gets discouraged; if mistakes are overlooked, she gets care-

less. As some cooks don't take correction pleasantly, however well given, you will find that it works best to give it at the end of your morning talk when all the ordering is finished.

In beginning with a new cook, it is well to explain at once to her that you want her to lay aside everything that is left over, if only a tablespoonful, putting it into the wire safe or refrigerator for you to decide about the next morning. This is not generally done by American housekeepers, so that, at first, cooks are apt to think you are mean unless you explain to them cheerfully and pleasantly that it is in order to have a greater variety and that this is one of the reasons that the French cookery is so good.

You will find in some of your receipt books about the French *pot-au-feu* and can learn from this how to manage

your own soup pot, using the bones left over from roasts, etc., to start a stock and varying this soup each day with leftovers, such as even a tablespoon of peas or some spinach (strained), or string beans, tomatoes, shreds of lettuce, or creamed oyster plant. This may not *sound* especially good to you, but my cook now makes soups that surprise me by their good flavor and variety in just this way.

These left-overs also make good salads, sometimes the basis being potatoes, to which is added a few beets, a little shredded lettuce, or, in addition, some meat chopped up, each thing being too small a quantity in itself for any one dish. Thus, a hearty and good salad or a hot dish is evolved from what many people allow to be thrown away. I would advise you to study some of the scientific diet menus that are published now and

find out the relative values in nutriment of the different foods. Among the ideas of value to you you will discover that there are many foods, such as cheese, peas, lentils, and beans, which take the place of meat. As, for example, one pound of cheese equals two pounds of beef in nutriment.

Eloise is at my elbow imploring me to stop writing and give *her* some advice about her dress for Mrs. Blake's fancy ball, so I must n't run on any more. Don't hesitate to tell me anything that troubles you, for it will be such a pleasure to me if I can help you.

Very affectionately yours,

Jane Prince.

P. S. Some days, when you don't feel well, it is hard to think of the menu, so I would advise you, whenever you have

tried a receipt and found it good, to write in a blank book, kept for the purpose, the name of the dish, the title of the cookery book, and the page on which you found the receipt; thus: "*Fish pudding*, Mary Ronald's Century Cook-Book, page 123." Before you know it you will have a book, not of receipts, but of suggestions, which will tell you just where to look for the sort of dish you want for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. In order to make it perfectly easy to turn at once to any especial dish, divide the blank book, before you make any entries in it, into as many sections as may be convenient, leaving several pages to each section:

So many pages for *relishes*
" " " " *soups without meat*
" " " " *meat soups*
" " " " *fish soups*
" " " " *fish receipts*
" " " " *entrées*

So many pages for *meats*
" " " " *vegetables*
" " " " *salads*
" " " " *desserts*
" " " " *lunch dishes*
" " " " *breads and cakes*
" " " " *eggs*

Can't you imagine the relief such a book would be in an emergency and how valuable it would become after a while because it has references only to tried receipts?

Devotedly yours,
Jane Prince.

CHAPTER II · THE BUDGET

York Harbor, *July* 30.

Dear Penelope:

Your letter came this morning and you need n't apologize at all for writing me again so soon, for I am always delighted to hear from you. It is very evident that you have an attack of the blues, so I am writing you at once — now that I have a little spare time — to see if I can't help you out of them as quickly as possible. Being terribly busy this week you must forgive me if I plunge at once into the subject and end when I have said my say, without any bits of gossip to enliven the letter. I will tell the girls to write you all the latest news.

It is n't at all surprising that you feel as though economy were drudgery when you are simply trying to live on just as little as you can with no other object

in view. What Dr. Richard Cabot says in his book that you and I read together is so true, "*Work* is doing what you don't now enjoy for the sake of a future which you clearly see and desire. *Drudgery* is doing under strain what you don't now enjoy and for no end that you can appreciate."

Now that you tell me you have started the plan of laying aside a certain sum for marketing and find it works well, and that it is interesting to see how far you can make a particular sum of money go in this department, I am encouraged to do some more suggesting along the same lines. I would advise you to take a quiet time, when your husband is not tired, and together think carefully over what all your other regular expenses are, making a list of them something like this: rent; service; lights; fuel; ice; milk; cab and car-fare;

doctor's bills and medicine; postage; incidentals; presents; travel; charity; marketing; groceries; your dress; your husband's clothes; amusements. *Some of these items*, such as doctor's bills and medicine, belong to the unexpected and you cannot make an allowance for them. *Others*, such as light, fuel, milk, etc., after some experience, you can make an approximate allowance for. *But there are some*, such as rent, service, charity, dress, etc., that you have under your control and for which you can make a definite allowance. Now, let us see if we can't turn drudgery into pleasant work. You have already put aside a definite sum for marketing; decide also upon a definite sum, that seems reasonable and liberal to you both, for some of the *other accounts that are under your control*, and think what fun it would be at the end of the month to

surprise your husband with savings from any of these accounts and occasionally to use this money for a little spree which you both can enjoy, or for some much-needed article for one of you or for the house, or else to put into a nest-egg for the future. You will find that you can do this if you "cut your garment according to your cloth."

Of course, in order to know just what you have saved on any one item of your account, you would have to keep a careful record of everything that you spend, and this you can do only by carrying a list with you when shopping and writing down at the time the cost of everything you buy. At the end of each month separate these expenditures, whether paid for by cash or check, into their separate items, adding all of one kind together under one head, thus:

Jany.	Rent	$45.00
	Dress	
	Gas	
	Fuel	
	Etc., etc. . .	

Keep this statement somewhere, either in the back of your account book or in a blank book kept for the purpose, so that you can always tell at a glance how much you have spent any month on any one item. This memorandum is very important and should be a great help to you, for, after several months of careful watching you will begin to know about how much you really need for your different regular expenses. Sometimes, after looking over the figures, you are led to feel that you have spent more than you ought on some one account, sometimes on another, and then the accounts have to be gone over to see how you have been careless. Even now I

find it of use to look back on this memorandum when money seems to be going a little faster than it ought to. Each family has to decide for itself what *proportion* should be allowed for these different expenses, but, with your income of $2200 a year, it is safe to allow fifty cents a day per person for all food. The house rent, so business men say, should not be more than a quarter of one's income, if possible a little less than that.

Neither of you will feel happy, I know, unless you lay aside something for your church interests and also to help, if only a very little, some of the public-spirited efforts for good. You can't improve on the Biblical proportion of a tenth of one's income for this, or more if you are prosperous. Some people could get almost that from the waste in their households. You can see how you could enjoy giv-

ing when you knew just what you had to give and were not worried with indecision.

Above all things, be very frank with each other in money affairs. Lack of this frankness is sometimes responsible for a man's getting into debt because he can't bear to deny his wife what she wants and she does n't know that he is living beyond his means to get it for her. I hope you won't think me cruel when I advise you to keep away from shops unless you have something to buy; in fact, waiting until you have quite a list, for if one does n't see the fascinating things one does n't feel the need of them. Bargains are a snare and a delusion, and, depend upon it, one spends less money by getting something at its regular price when one actually needs it than in getting something very cheap to lay by

for a possible need which may never come.

I can understand your feeling perfectly well that economy seems so mean, but all danger of its being mean is removed if you waste nothing on yourselves or your household in order to be able to do something better or wiser or more generous with your money. We have nothing but admiration of the French thrift (we don't call it economy), and why should not we Americans follow their example?

You may have an income of your own some day, and I shall venture to advise you about that even if that beloved husband of yours is looking over your shoulder! I hope you won't fall into the mistake, on account of the love and confidence you have in him, of putting it into the common purse for regular ex-

penses. It does n't reflect at all on that confidence to keep your own accounts separate from his. The most devoted of husbands and wives often differ in their ideas of what they want to spend money for, and many a good and kind husband would soon begin to feel a right over his wife's money if it went into the common purse, so long as he was spending it conscientiously in the way he thought would bring her the most comfort. In the first glamour you can imagine how a wife would enjoy the sacrifice of giving freely all her possessions into her husband's care to control as he thought best, but later she might awaken to such a sense of the responsibility that the possession of money entails that she would feel that she ought to decide for herself how it should be spent. To make the change then would be likely to cause hurt feel-

ings or even a misunderstanding. For a woman to keep her accounts separate need never interfere with her helping out at any time when she saw the need of it, and that would be a genuine pleasure.

If there is anything else you want to talk over with me, now is the very best time to write, for *all* my children are going off on visits and the house will seem so lonely that I shall be more glad than usual to devote some of my time to you.

Very affectionately, with apologies to Tom for the last part of my letter,

Your friend,

Jane Prince.

CHAPTER III · SERVANTS

York Harbor, *August* 10.

Dear Penelope:

It has been so long since your last letter that I feared you were ill and was at my desk starting to write you when yours came and explained the whole situation. What a picture of misery, and to think that that nice-looking Mary turned out so unsatisfactory and that you have had such a succession since her departure! So you feel degraded and as though there was something the matter with you personally, do you? Well, there is nothing the matter with you, and you are the same dear girl that you have always been, and with your willingness to give the servant question all the thought that it needs, these very experiences will help you to cope with it more wisely. It made me laugh to hear how

disgusted your husband was because your present housemaid was such a fright! Don't let that worry you; just provide her with neat white aprons and a cap and he won't know her. Tell him I wish he had seen the little apparition that came to me, when we were first married (we were living in the South at the time), in answer to my advertisement for a housemaid. At least forty-eight tiny little braids, each about four inches long, stood straight out from her little black head and she was clad in bright red plaid from top to toe, her face beaming all over with good nature. She looked clean, as you say your new maid does, and the transformation was complete when later, with hair smoothed out, and in a neat calico dress and white apron, she stood before me for inspection. Since then, you can imagine I have had all sorts and kinds

and so many experiences that I have gradually grown to look at domestic service in a broader way.

You have had enough discomfort already to make you feel that it is a serious problem and I am so glad that what you have gone through has only determined you to come out victorious in the end and not to follow the example of so many women who go into apartments to get rid of household cares. Undoubtedly they do reduce the number of their servants and their worries in this way, but the family also loses much of the home feeling. What would we think of our husbands if, when the men in their employ gave them trouble, they said to us that they could not manage their employees and would have to get rid of most of them which would necessitate their reducing their business and our living in

less comfort in consequence? Would n't we in our hearts think they were failures in their vocations? And yet we women are just as much failures in our vocation when we give up the privacy and comforts of home to go into an apartment because we cannot manage our servants.

Every woman who tries to bring about a better understanding between herself and her servants helps every other woman to make home life more comfortable, so it really is n't a little thing to do. On the contrary, if enough women try, they may bring about great results. Nothing is so absolutely destructive to an understanding between mistress and maid as the habit, so common and so catching, of looking at servants as a class by themselves, unlike other human beings and antagonistic to their mistresses. What we should do is to try to get into

a sympathetic mood by remembering that human nature is the same the world over and in all classes, the great difference being in education, early surroundings, and training. If we only keep this in mind, while it really seems almost impossible to understand the ignorance of many servants and to see things from their point of view, yet we may at least realize that it would be a disgrace if our ideals of conduct were not higher than theirs.

When I tell you that you will need nearly every known virtue to keep house well, you will expect to come out of the experience a piece of absolute perfection! Certainly PATIENCE is one of the foremost needed. It is so easy and natural for us to scold a servant when she has neglected her duty or done something stupid, instead of patiently following her up every

time she neglects anything and with a pleasant but decided manner seeing that she does it. And yet I know, from experience, that the scolding produces no result except to make her angry, while the other method will have one of two results; she will either get into the habit of doing her work well to save herself the mortification or irritation of being corrected or else she will show you that she is n't worth training and that you might as well let her go. One's patience, however, may cease to be a virtue in the case of a sullen servant. I would not keep such a one, no matter how good her work was, if after having spoken to her about it she did not change, for nothing will wear you out sooner, and to no purpose, than having to contend with that kind of a disposition. Tell her the reason that you part with her and perhaps she will do better

in her next place, in which case you will have helped her and her future mistress.

UNSELFISHNESS — there's plenty of opportunity for a mistress to show if she is sincere in her desire to be fair. Just one instance: It isn't very pleasant, to say the least, if, after one has trained a servant to be skillful and she has stayed for several years so that one has grown dependent on her, she leaves for higher wages. Yet in every other calling people are praised for what is called their ambition to rise, and if we can't pay high wages, how can we expect to keep the most skillful servants? And why should we make them feel as though they were not behaving well when they leave for more money?

How much WISDOM and THOUGHTFULNESS, too, we need to keep all the different dispositions in the house in harmony, to know just the right moment

to correct and the time when extra work or a rainy wash-day or a headache make it wisest to delay correction.

And then MORAL COURAGE — it is wonderful how that often will win the day. It is fatal to be afraid of servants. If you have to reprove one of them that you like and do not wish to lose, it is a good thing to fortify yourself with the thought that it would be better to lose her than to give in to any unreasonableness, for that would certainly put you in her power. You will be surprised how the calm firmness that this thought will give you will generally win the day, if it is backed by the fact that the maid knows she is in a comfortable home and has a considerate mistress.

But I know you want me to talk about your particular troubles, when there *was* a comfortable home and a considerate mistress. I can readily believe how

interested you were in making Mary happy and that you wanted her to feel that your house was her home, and I can just picture how sweet and nice your kitchen and her bedroom looked with everything so neat and new. It was disappointing, in return for all your thoughtfulness of her comfort, to have her show that all she apparently wanted was to get away from her work as quickly and as often as possible. And then after her departure to have such a series of incompetents in quick succession, each with some new demand, was perfectly disheartening. I do feel so sorry for you, for I know just how discouraged you must have been. Of course I have no way of divining what the cause of dissatisfaction was, but we always have to bear in mind that there is so much of the antagonistic spirit between mistress and maid that

those of us who do not have it, but who want to be kind, have to suffer for those who are unjust. At any time a maid may come to us direct from a home where she has had a hard mistress, who gave her her outings grudgingly, did n't like her to have her friends come to see her, and perhaps, while giving her an almost luxurious room, rarely spoke a kind word to her and took it for granted she would be faithless and perhaps even dishonest.

Or, she may have come from some good-natured but thoughtless mistress where her room was miserably uncomfortable and where possibly she had to share her bed, washstand, and bureau with a girl whom she had never seen before or who was n't clean. From such places she would come to you naturally in an antagonistic mood, and, suspecting

that she would not be looked out for, make demands for even more than she really wanted. She would make the mistake that I have just advised you to avoid, of classing all mistresses together as unkind or thoughtless. Of course it is very unintelligent to do this, for we might as well class all lawyers or all bankers together and expect no good from any of them because some have such low standards. And yet we can hardly blame her when we ourselves have heard so many mistresses talk of servants as though they were all worthless. You seem to think you might have come to some agreement with Mary if you had n't been so indignant at what seemed ingratitude after all you had done for her. Possibly that is true, but it is past now and it is useless to cry over spilt milk. What you can do is to start out differently with your

new maid in the light of your past experience.

I think you will find yourself much happier if you don't look for gratitude, for it is n't to be found very much in any class of life. Above all things, don't let what you have gone through make you distrustful, for it is the part of wisdom as well as of kindness to let the new maid feel that you expect well of her. If she has good stuff in her, that is the way to bring it out. We ourselves show our best side to those who believe in us.

You seem to have a vague feeling that Mary's leaving you had something to do with the outings she wanted. That may have been so, for very few of us can enter into servants' lives enough to realize the vital importance of their outings to them. I can understand your being a little distrustful of her when she wanted

to go to a dance, for I used to feel that way myself, but I don't feel so any longer. Through interest in social work I have learned to appreciate how important recreation is to all classes and how natural is the taste for dancing and the theater. Of course, if a maid wanted to go often, that could n't be allowed, for it would n't be compatible with good work.

While most of us are interested in helping to give recreation to the less fortunate classes, we have hardly awakened to the fact that there is one class, that of our servants, who are ridiculed if they want it. It is really quite pathetic to think how little appreciation we have of their need of amusement, and how many jokes are made at the expense of those who want occasionally to go to a dance or to the theater. You and I know

some people who don't even want to let them have their friends come to call. If we desire good work from servants we shall have to be more human and show them that we take an interest in their having a good time.

Perhaps we have had such easy lives ourselves that we have to go back to our childhood to remember the delicious sense of freedom from restraint when school was out, in order to form some idea of the pleasure a maid feels on her "afternoon" when she leaves all duties behind her and gets beyond the sound of the bell. As a well-trained maid, she always has to go about the house noiselessly, never raising her voice in speaking unless spoken to. Perhaps she doesn't like the other maids and longs for some congenial friend and to talk and laugh unrestrainedly. Is it surprising that she for-

gets that she does n't have to pay her board and lodging as the girls do who are otherwise employed than in domestic service, and that she only thinks of their greater freedom? She naturally longs for that freedom and for some time that she can surely call her own.

If any trouble crops up with this new maid, don't (because you are so sorry that you let the other one go) offer her higher wages or urge her to stay. It will give you backbone to remember that she will be useless if she stays while dissatisfied and also that offering her higher wages when you are paying enough is only a bribe and simply makes her feel more essential to you than she really is. It would n't remove the cause of her dissatisfaction but only delay its coming to the surface again. Sometimes by a quiet talk you can find out what the trouble is

and if the complaint is reasonable you can remove the cause.

A case in point is an experience that I myself once had when there was dissatisfaction among some servants whom I really liked. It was after I had, with a great deal of trouble and study, tried to arrange all their afternoons and evenings out and their Sundays to be, as I thought, convenient for myself and comfortable for them. I was indignant at first at what seemed ingratitude and felt ready to dismiss them all. But, on sober thought, the idea occurred to me of trying to get at the bottom of the trouble by calling them all together and letting each one in turn tell me what was her cause of discontent. At the same time I told them all that, while I might not be able to do what they wanted, still, as my only thought in arranging their outings was to give them

rest and have them enjoy themselves, I was ready to consider making some changes so long as they would not interfere with the proper and regular running of the household. It seemed quite a new idea to them that their mistress was really interested in their pleasure. They were nice women and with the prospect of a sympathetic hearing, their antagonism seemed to pass away.

To my surprise I found that it was not more outings that they wanted (in fact they proposed fewer), but to be away from the house longer at a time. I promised them nothing at the moment because I feared that I should say something unwise, but impressed it upon them that they would have to work together and help one another if they wanted these changes. This conversation resulted in my arranging a programme that was satisfactory to

them and perfectly convenient to me, and one that I have not had to change for years.

It may help you very much to find out what I learned from this conversation, so here it is. *The first point was that servants need their regular outings to be longer than they usually are,* because it takes them so much longer than it does us to get dressed and to reach the more remote parts of the town where they usually go. This seemed to me reasonable as I thought over the work of the different servants. Instead of just putting on her hat and coat as we do, a maid has to change everything to make herself neat and fresh to go to church or shopping or to visit her friends. If she has the ordinary two hours' leave, in most cases she would have to turn around to come back almost as soon as she reaches her destination. If she goes

to church we know the service will not be out till after twelve-thirty or even later; so that in order to return in time to set the table by one o'clock, she must leave the church instantly without a moment's chat with her friends. The waitress cannot get her breakfast things finished before ten o'clock in many households and with the common habit of irregular Sunday breakfasts generally it will be much later. With the chambermaid the situation is probably worse if there are a number of rooms to make up, and it seems almost impossible for the cook to get to morning church unless some special arrangement is made for her.

The second point was that servants would like to be able to count on an absolutely certain, specified time to leave the house and to return, both on Sundays and week-days. This they cannot do if some of the fam-

ily stay in bed very late, if there is an invalid in the house, or if there are extra people at the Sunday lunch, unless the mistress makes a very definite plan for the servants to relieve one another, so that their free time of going out or to church will not be interfered with and the regular work will still go on.

The third and last point that I can remember is that most servants really do not care to go out so frequently, but that, on the contrary, they would sometimes rather stay at home on their day out if they could be sure of the time to themselves and that they would not be called on for work.

These three points are always carefully conceded to them in hotels, and consequently hotel service is much desired by maids, as housekeepers in small towns find to their great inconvenience.

This experience of mine may let light into your situation and give you a basis for a good programme. In working it out it is necessary to be careful not to make things comfortable for the servants at the expense of the family. As the two points of making the outing longer and starting at regular hours can only be accomplished by one servant taking the duty of the other in her absence, it is important to impress on their minds at the outset that these duties must be performed so well that the household will not be inconvenienced. Since it is a fair exchange, maids are usually contented to do this, and it is the duty of the mistress to train them and to see that each servant carries out the idea, doing her fair share of the work. Where there is more than one servant, these outings can easily be arranged, even with a family of irregular habits, so that

they all will be able to get off promptly and stay out long enough, without any inconvenience to the household. In the case where there is only one maid, who does the cooking and all the work of the house, the household is, of necessity, run more informally, and a chafing-dish meal can take the place of one of the Sunday meals in order to let her off. But if the mistress feels that she must have her meals go on just as regularly on Sunday as any other day, she should hire some one to come in for the time the servant is out. You can readily see that she should not expect one servant to keep up the house unaided in just the way that two or three servants do it.

I have heard nice women say, "I have only one servant, so of course I can't let her go out." This is really cruel, though not intentionally so, because, if the maid

has all the work to do, she needs a complete and regular rest all the more. The mistress should look upon the money paid to some one for taking her place as one of the regular necessary household expenses.

Whether there is one servant or many, each one is entitled to some regular time to herself and if housekeepers were more careful about this there would be less discontent among servants, I am sure. As I said before, we need to be a great deal more human in our relationship with them. How reasonable, for example, these three points seem when we take the pains to see the servants' point of view, and how easy it would be to misjudge the situation otherwise. What most of them really want is to have some time that they can actually call their own. You would be surprised to know the

calm that settled down upon my family and how much more home life there appeared to be in the kitchen after I had arranged a new programme of work and given them these three points that they wanted. Just try it and you will see for yourself, and I am sure too, that you will be glad to practice every virtue that good house management requires if, in that way, you can bring about peace instead of that uncomfortable atmosphere which constant dissatisfaction among the servants causes. If a home is unhappy downstairs you can always feel it upstairs, and, in fact, sometimes at the front door.

I believe I will enclose the plan for the outings of three servants that has worked so well in my case. A simpler plan can be arranged for two servants because they alternate. I have already said what I think is our duty in case of one.

What a long letter I have written you! I send it on the "wings" of the first mail hoping that it will reach you in time really to help you in your present situation.

Affectionately yours,

Jane Prince.

CHAPTER IV · MAID OF ALL WORK

York Harbor, *August* 18.

Dear Penelope:

Your ears must have burned this morning, for I have been thinking so hard of you. It is an entrancing day after a storm, and the sound of the slow, dreamy washing of the waves on the shore, as I sit here knitting on the piazza, seem to carry me far away from everything about me to your dear self. The girls came home yesterday from visiting Mrs. Gardner with all the latest news of you, how sweet and pretty your surroundings are, and, best of all, Tom's devotion to you and your happiness. "Spooney," they called you both, but never mind, what do they know about it? You and I understand, — that is enough, is n't it?

Your little message to me showed that there was one annoyance, however, weigh-

ing on you in the midst of all this bliss, the undercurrent of worry from signs of discontent in the kitchen. When everything is so bright and pleasant around you, and you are *so* happy, why can't the maid feel so too? I am afraid it will be many a long day before I can go down to see you, but I am so glad I have my hands and eyes and they shall be devoted to you, dear child, this morning. The more I think about the apparent discontent of your present maid, the more do I believe that it is because you do not realize that a maid of all work cannot do all that you expect her to do and also give the finishing touches that give charm to the home. I know how you love everything to be the pink of perfection, and it is n't necessary for you to lower your standards of refinement of living, — only to remember to be con-

tent to live more simply or informally and that all the pretty little touches must come from you. I have dined a number of times with a young couple where the wife, accustomed to servants before her marriage, did most of the housework, including the cooking, and only had a woman come in for the rough work, sweeping, etc., and to wash the dishes when she had guests. The table always looked refined and sweet and the little apartment made you feel at once the interested touch of the family.

So don't be discouraged because, after your servant dusts, everything looks crooked and the rooms have a neglected appearance. It is simply because you are asking too much of your maid, who has all she can do in taking care of the practical side of the housework. When I spoke a little while ago of living more

simply, visions came before me of your wedding day and the room, that looked like a miniature Tiffany's, spread out with your wedding presents, — silver, cut glass, and ornaments, — and then I thought of your little maid and how impossible it would be for her to keep the silver looking bright as it should, with everything else she has to do, and how discouraged she would be at the very thought of it. So my advice to you is to put all your silver away that you do not need until you have enough servants to keep it bright without overworking them. Your dining-room will look much prettier with a few bright pieces than overladen with silver that is dull and gives the impression of careless housekeeping.

You must remember that each of the servants you have been accustomed to

had her own especial part of the housework to do and plenty of time to do it in. It is n't so with the maid of all work. She has so much to do that you really have to choose what of the lighter work you will find the pleasantest to perform and do something yourself in order to make her burden easier and have your rooms look homelike and attractive. Suppose you decide to make up your own beds, do the dusting, and attend to the lamps. That is all good exercise and you can wear a pair of gloves to keep your hands nice while you are working. You can manage in this way. If the maid gets up at six-thirty, dresses, throws her mattress over the foot of her bed, and opens her windows to air her room, she can be ready to start the kitchen fire, if there is a coal range, and put on the cereal (which has been cooked the

night before and is much better for long cooking) by seven o'clock. She can then go into the parlor, draw up the shades there and in the dining-room, rebuild the fire if it has been used, and go over the floor with a dustless mop. After that she can set the dining-table and cook the breakfast. (You will have to put your beds to air yourself before you leave your room.) When she has put the last of your breakfast on the table, you can wait on yourselves, leaving her to get her own breakfast. (Just here I must speak to you of the loneliness of the maid of all work having all her meals by herself, because, when you think of this, and know that many of them never even sit down to their table, I know you will try to encourage yours to take proper and regular meals and will see that the kitchen is made a homelike place for her.)

To return to the order of her work. When you have finished your breakfast she can clear the dining-table, wash your breakfast things, and straighten the kitchen. After that she should let you know that she is ready to take your orders for the meals. Having finished your breakfast and seen Tom off for his business, you might commence your share of the housework by going to your room, making up the beds, dusting it and all the other rooms and putting them all in order. When the maid lets you know that she is ready to receive your orders for the day, you should stop your work temporarily, if you have n't finished it, in order not to delay hers, which is more important. Then you should go with her to the refrigerator and wire chest to see the left-overs and plan the meals for the day, utilizing the left-overs and writing on a

small pad, kept for the purpose, the bill of fare for lunch, dinner, and breakfast, pinning this up in the kitchen, to leave no excuse for forgetting. All the orders having been disposed of, the menus of the day before can be gone over, praising the successes and pointing out the mistakes. This being finished, the maid can clean the bathroom and do up her own room and be ready for the work of the day which can be arranged in some such way as this:

Monday . .	Washing.
Tuesday . .	Ironing.
Wednesday .	Bedrooms, one week; dining-room and living-room, next week.
Thursday. .	Hall and bathroom, one week; brasses, next week.
Friday . .	Silver. Afternoon out every week.
Saturday . .	Kitchen, refrigerator, etc.

In the case of the maid of all work, *washing the windows* has to be done by outside labor, and the time to do it depends a good deal on wind and weather.

One has to be very considerate on washing-day, planning ahead so as to have a cold lunch if possible on that day and not to invite any one to dinner. The "afternoon out" is another time when the maid must be thought of, and nothing should be allowed to interfere with her having this regular time to herself undisturbed. You and Tom will have, both of you, to understand the necessity of this consideration so that he will realize that he must n't bring friends home at these times unless it is for such an informal frolic that your guests understand it too, and enjoy what you can have on the chafing-dish. Don't leave disorder for her to clear up which would give her as much trouble

as getting the dinner. Lack of thought in ways like this often causes a servant to leave, though she won't give you the true reason.

Sunday is another time when she has to be thought of, to be sure to let her have her time off so that she can get to church or to see her friends. You will have to arrange all this with reference to the customs of the place in which you are living or your distance from the center of things. It is much better to accept the fact that this must be arranged satisfactorily to you both than to make some arbitrary rule of your own which will always cause trouble. If you compare notes with your friends you will find plenty who don't do this, but you will find plenty, too, who have ceaseless trouble with servants.

Every day except washing and ironing

day the maid can and should by three-thirty o'clock be neatly dressed in black with a white apron, to go to the door. Plain black sateen waists are cheap and wash perfectly well, so that she can wear one while cooking, but I would advise you to provide her also with turn-over collars that are rather low at the neck, because if she wears the stand-up kind she will be pretty sure to take it off so as to be comfortable when cooking and perhaps mortify you by appearing at the door sometime collarless.

You will find that you can invite as many as four to dinner informally, making six in all, with a maid of all work if you have some one in to help her wash the dishes. I don't mean for you to engage an expert for this, for they are expensive, but some friend of your maid who enjoys the sociability of coming with

the prospect of a good dinner and a little extra money thrown in. Of course you have to arrange to have things that don't take much time or can be prepared the day before and that your maid cooks especially well, never trying a new dish at such a time.

It can be a nice little dinner, nevertheless. Suppose you begin with *grapefruit*, which you can arrange yourself, cutting out the center and putting sugar in and setting it in the ice-box early in the day so that the juices will be drawn out and it will be cold and delicious by dinner time. Next, *a clear soup*, which can be prepared the day before or can be a canned consommé of the best make, flavored with a little lemon, and with a thin slice of lemon in each plate. (Even if your maid can make a delicious cream soup I would n't advise attempting it, since it takes too

much time on the day of the dinner.) Third, *a roast and two or three vegetables.* For the fourth course *a salad* which you can prepare yourself, making the dressing. Next the fifth course, *ice-cream and cake*, or some other bought dessert; and, finally, *coffee.*

All these suggestions that I have written you have actually been tried and found practical and cause the least amount of friction, so I send them to you to modify to suit your own case. That is where your genius will come in —the modifications that oil the machinery of your house to suit your circumstances and your maid's particular characteristics.

I have only a minute before the mail goes to add another suggestion to this long letter of advice, and that is that it might help you to look into the question

of the innumerable domestic labor-saving machines, such as fireless cookers, bread-mixers, vacuum cleaners, washing-machines, electric utensils of all sorts and kinds, and see if there are any that could be used to advantage in your household. With every wish that contentment may soon reign in your kitchen,

Devotedly yours,

Jane Prince.

CHAPTER V · WEEKLY CLEANING

York Harbor, *August* 27.

Dear Penelope:

Your sense of the ludicrous is going to be of the greatest help over rough places, for often little troubles seem to vanish if we can only laugh over them. I was very much amused with your clever devices to cover up from your maid the fact that you could not remember in what order her work ought to be done. It is surprising, is n't it, how we can go on living for years in our mothers' well-ordered households without ever thinking what the method is that makes everything go so like clockwork?

But it is the experience of most of us, and this letter shall go off at once to you hoping to reach you before the next sweeping day, for, as I understand it, that is the vital question for the moment.

Without any preamble I shall plunge right into my subject. With two or three maids, of course, every room should have its regular weekly cleaning, but where there is but one she can only manage to sweep each room once in two weeks, you arranging the order of her work as I suggested to you in my last letter.

I will give you two methods of cleaning, one with a broom, and the other with a vacuum cleaner, but I strongly recommend the cleaner as it raises almost no dust and makes the cleaning much easier. You can buy a kind now in the department stores that is no heavier than an ordinary carpet sweeper, is used the same way by hand, does not require electricity in the house, and is comparatively inexpensive, ranging from six dollars up.

The following is the order for the thorough weekly cleaning with a broom:

Before beginning run the shades up to the top and open the windows at the top keeping them shut at the bottom. The rising hot air will then carry the dust out of the window, while, if the window be open at the bottom, the cold air, which falls, will blow the dust in.

Take small rugs out to be shaken.

Brush window sills and lower part of blinds.

Dust each small piece of furniture and take it out of the room.

Shake out of the window all table covers and take them out of the room while the cleaning is going on.

If it is a bedroom, cover bed with dusting sheet.

Brush hard all upholstered furniture with a whisk broom and cover with dusting sheets.

Dust all ornaments laying them care-

fully under dusting sheet on sofa or bed.

All little things being out of the room and large pieces of furniture covered, sweep carpet or rug, and then, with dustless mop, go over the floor, being careful to clean under heavy pieces of furniture that cannot be moved, rubbing the floor well, but not using oil, as it soils light dresses, or water, as it takes the polish off. Once a month or oftener wax the floor and polish it with a soft cloth on your broom or a polishing brush that comes for the purpose.

Clean mirrors by washing with water that has a little ammonia in it. Wipe and polish with a lintless cloth or newspaper. Newspaper is always on hand and makes a fine polish.

Wash the gas globes if they are dirty (probably about once a month), being

careful not to screw them on tight when they are put back, as that makes the globes crack when they get hot.

Take away all soiled bureau and side-board covers. Lay the fire if it has been used, and wash up the hearth.

Laying a coal fire in the grate: Put the blower on to prevent as much as possible the ashes flying about. Shake the ashes down through the bars of the grate with a poker. Remove them from the pan with the shovel and put them in the coal scuttle. Take the ash-pan out and brush under it. Take the blower off and twist newspapers in loose rolls and put them in the bottom of the grate. Lay kind-lings crosswise on top of the paper with spaces for draughts in between. Put coal on top of the kindlings. When the fire is wanted, put the blower on, and light the fire from below. When

the coal is well caught, take the blower off.

Laying an open wood fire: Place a large log close against the back of the chimney, another in front, leaving a space between. In this space between the two lay lightly pieces of newspaper twisted loosely; on top of this paper place kindlings crosswise resting on both logs, and far enough apart to let the air through; then one or two other sticks on top of the kindlings bark side down. Do not remove the ashes from a wood fire, as it burns better on a bed of hot ashes.

If soot should ever fall from the chimney on to the rug, sprinkle the place thickly with corn meal and brush it up. This removes at once what otherwise would be a bad stain.

After the fire has been laid, *empty all* scraps from scrap baskets into a recep-

tacle and take this and also the hod of ashes, if the fire was of coal, downstairs.

Close windows, pull shades down halfway, arrange curtains, take covers off furniture, bring chairs back. Put clean bureau and sideboard covers on, and put the ornaments back in their places. Fold up dusting sheets and put them away.

If brasses are brightened once a week, they remain bright with less effort, but if you have a good many it is best to reserve one morning for this, as it is dirty work. A pair of large old gloves should be provided to keep the hands clean when doing it. Just as with silver, with only one maid it is better not to have too many brasses out, unless you can hire some one to clean them.

When I tell you the order of cleaning a room by a hand-power vacuum cleaner

that is made only to sweep the carpets and rugs, does not go by electricity, and has no attachments, you will see that it saves you the most troublesome and heaviest part of the work of sweeping day and that two or three rooms can be cleaned in the time it would take to clean one with a broom. By the following order of work you get the best results and do not have to go a second time over any of your dusting. No dusting sheets have to be used, rugs do not have to be taken up nor furniture and ornaments removed. Of course, before beginning to clean you open windows and arrange shades in the same way that I described when preparing to sweep a room with a broom.

The weekly cleaning of a room with a hand-power vacuum cleaner:

Brush window sills.

Brush hard all upholstered furniture with a whisk broom.

Shake out of the window all table covers and take them out of the room while cleaning is going on.

Go over carpet or rugs with the vacuum cleaner and then the bare floor with a dustless mop. (Sweeping with a vacuum cleaner is supposed not to make any dust, but as it is n't perfection there is a fine dust that rises from it; so all the dusting should come after the sweeping.)

Dust every piece of furniture, shaking duster out of window.

Dust all ornaments and shelves.

Clean mirrors and do all the work coming after this in the same order as described in cleaning a room with a broom.

With the more expensive electric power vacuum cleaners the order of work

is the same, but there are all sorts of attachments to clean floors, upholstered furniture, curtains, etc., that any of their agents would explain to you.

I am speaking from experience when advising a vacuum cleaner, because, after using an electric one in town, I bought for use here, where I have n't electricity in the house, the hand-power kind, as I could n't stand the dust made by an ordinary broom. If you decide to get one, do let me know how you like it.

Your practical but loving friend,

Jane Prince.

CHAPTER VI · FAMILY MEALS

York Harbor, *August* 28.

Dear Penelope:

After I sent off my letter to you, I turned over your last page and found a scrawl that I didn't notice at first, — a polite little request for the details of serving one's every day meals. Why, of course, I will give it to you, and shall take it for granted that your maid's mind is a perfect blank on the subject. So much the better, for now you can put into it just what you want her to have there.

I would begin by impressing on her how important it is to have the tablecloth smooth with the creases running straight down the middle and everything set evenly on the table. Show her yourself how neat it looks when done in this

way and how badly when the things are crooked. If she has n't a straight eye, the only way to do is to give her a foot-rule and have her measure distances at first until her eye is trained. Don't attempt anything elaborate and be content to use your simple china which can be easily replaced, so that when, in her awkwardness, she breaks it, your heart won't be broken too. Perhaps you can find some old china-cabinet with glass doors in which you can keep those beautiful plates that were among your wedding presents, and be able to have them to look at without their being any care. If the maid has n't too much to attend to, she will be able to do what she does do, well, and if you have your meals served nicely every day, then, when you have guests, she will not be confused by some new order of things, but will be perfectly

natural and serve them well as a matter of course. Your own meals, too, will go more quickly and easily and be more appetizing if always served carefully and regularly.

Let us take a perfectly simple family dinner: First course, soup; second course, roast and (two) or (three) vegetables; third course, salad or dessert; fourth course, coffee; and begin to train her in this way:

See that the canton flannel undercloth is perfectly smooth on the table.

Over this place the tablecloth with the crease going exactly down the middle.

Make sure that whatever glass, silver, china, knives, etc., is to be used on the table is bright.

Put a dinner plate for each person at even distances apart from one another.

To the right of each plate place as many knives as you need with their sharp edges turned toward the plate, then next to them

the soup spoon with the hollow part of the bowl of the spoon turned up.

Put the napkin at the right of the soup spoon, folded over neatly once, as it would take up too much room square, and lay on it exactly in the middle a piece of bread cut about three inches long by one and a half thick and two inches wide, or else a roll.

Place a tumbler at the point of the knives.

At the left of each plate lay as many forks as are needed for the meal, with their prongs turned upward and placed in the order in which they are to be used, the fork for the first course being on the outside and farthest from the plate.

Exactly in the center of the table put your plant.

Place a salt cellar and a pepper pot in each corner of an imaginary square of which the plant is the center.

Arrange the side-table — or sideboard, if you have no side-table — with everything extra on it that will be needed during the meal, so that you will never have to open a drawer while you are serving it.

Put on this table, in nice order, so that it

will look attractive, the dessert plates, on each of which is a finger bowl with a doily under it; also any cold plates such as salad plates, if they are to be used, and any extra forks, spoons, sauce ladles, etc., that will be required.

Fill the finger bowls a third full of water and place a fork and a spoon on the doily, one on one side, the other on the other, of the finger bowl.

Have also on the side-table a plate of bread, the pieces all cut the same size as those already on the dining-table.

Set a pitcher of iced water in a convenient place in pantry or dining-room.

Arrange a tray with the after-dinner coffee cups on it and the bowl of lump sugar and sugar tongs in the center. Put an after-dinner coffee spoon on each saucer. Have this in pantry.

(The only spoon that is ever put with the forks and knives by the plates on the table is the soup spoon. Teaspoons for grape-fruit, for bouillon, tea, coffee, etc., are always put on the plate or saucer on which these foods and drinks are served.)

When the dining- and side-tables are set

and the first course ready to come into the dining-room, fill the tumblers with iced water.

Go into the pantry and pour each soup plate half full of soup.

If it is the custom of the family to use a musical Japanese gong to announce meals, strike it two or three light taps. If they don't use one, then go to the mistress wherever she is and say quietly, "Dinner is served, Mrs. ——."

When every one is seated, take a plate of soup in each hand and place each plate in turn in front of each person, laying it on the dinner plate that is already there, serving the older members of the family first, if there are children, otherwise going right around the table, always laying it down from the right side of each person.

When the soup course is finished and the second course is in the pantry, bring a hot plate in your left hand and, taking up the serving plate, with the soup plate on it, in your right, replace it with the fresh hot one, doing this from the right side of each person; going, in this way, all around the table till all have hot, clean plates.

Then bring in the platter of meat, placing it in front of the carver with the carving knife, which has been sharpened before the meal, at his right and the fork at his left side. Put the gravy boat and ladle at his right.

Stand at the left of the carver with an extra hot plate in your hand and, taking the plate with meat on it, put the empty, hot plate in its place. This gives the carver time to cut another slice and have it ready when you come back with the next empty plate.

Now go right around the table putting a plate of meat before each person and taking up the empty plate till all have been served. Put down and take up from the right side.

If there is jelly or any small thing to pass, put it on a small tray, having first placed a spoon in it, and, taking the tray in one hand and a vegetable dish in the other, pass them all around the table, stooping a little as you first offer one, and then draw back and offer the other on the *left* side of each person.

(It is a good rule to remember in serving a meal that everything that admits of a choice must be *passed* at the *left* and that everything

that does not admit of a choice must be *placed* from the *right*.)

Next take the remaining vegetable in one hand and a plate of bread in the other and pass them to the left of each person all around the table.

Watch carefully to pass food again before any one has a chance to ask for anything and see that all have water and bread throughout the dinner.

When every one has finished this course, remove first the meat platter, being careful that the carvers and spoon are secure so as not to drop off. Then remove gravy boat on a small tray. Take out vegetables, bread, etc. Remove the used plates, one in each hand, never piling them on top of each other.

Bring a tray and quietly remove peppers and salts and any knives and forks remaining on the table and take them into the pantry.

Bring a plate or small tray and with a napkin remove the crumbs.

From the side-table bring a dessert plate in each hand until you have given one to each person, always going to the *right* of the person to set it down.

Put the dessert in front of the mistress, the spoon to left, and sauce boat with spoon on her right side.

Stand by her with an empty dessert plate and pass the plates as in the other courses.

After the dessert is finished remove dessert and all the plates, and, after having filled the cups with hot coffee in the pantry, pass them around to the family, either at the table or in the parlor, whichever your mistress desires. If the coffee is taken in the parlor, bring an empty tray in later and take away the coffee-cups.

Always remember that everything belonging to one course must be removed before serving another course.

If the last course is salad instead of dessert, then, as you take off the used plates of the meat course, replace them with cold plates, bring the bowl of salad on and do not remove crumbs, salts, etc., until this course is finished. If your mistress prefers to make the salad dressing herself, put the bowl of lettuce in front of her, and at her right hand the oil, vinegar, and condiments she desires, and a small bowl and a tablespoon to mix the dress-

ing in. When she has made the dressing and mixed it with the lettuce, quickly remove, on a tray, the oil, vinegar, etc., and pass the salad bowl around to each person, offering with your other hand a plate of crackers. This course being finished, remove salad, then plates, then peppers, salts, small silver, and then crumbs as described before. After that bring on finger-bowl plates. Then coffee as before.

If your mistress prefers not to serve a meat course, such as chops that need no carving, or a dessert course, such as berries that are easily served, you can pass them around without setting them on the table.

Having now explained the method of serving the family dinner the following few suggestions will be sufficient for breakfast and lunch:

If your mistress does not use a tablecloth for breakfast, place the centerpiece exactly in the middle of the table and in the center of this the plate of fruit (or the plant if there is no fruit). Have the under-plate doily at each

place and on it put a fruit plate on which is a finger bowl one third full of water, with a fruit knife at the right of the bowl and a spoon at the left on the plate. To the left of this put a small plate for bread and butter or muffins. Knives and forks are placed the same as for dinner, just as many as you need for the meal.

In front of your mistress place the breakfast tray for coffee-urn, hot-water kettle, hot-milk pitcher, and sugar-bowl, but do not bring the hot things in till the family is ready to have breakfast.

Arrange the side-table with any extra things that will be needed.

Keep the butter cool and bring it on at the last moment and place it on one side of the table opposite the bread, which has been freshly cut.

Leave the rest of the loaf of bread in the pantry on a bread-board with the bread-knife ready to cut more slices if needed.

See that the newspaper is ready for the master of the house where he likes to have it.

Look around to see if the sideboard draw-

ers are all tightly closed so as to look neat and trim.

Touch the gong lightly to announce breakfast.

Bring on hot coffee, hot milk, and the hot-water kettle.

When all are seated, pass around the fruit, then stand at your mistress's left with a small tray and taking the coffee-cups as she fills them, place them in turn at the right of each person.

When the fruit course is finished, remove the plates, putting fresh hot ones in their places in the same way that you do it at dinner.

Put the main dish of the breakfast in front of your master and the others square and opposite one another on the table.

See that every one has water in his tumbler and then go to get your own breakfast.

Family lunch is served much as dinner is served unless your mistress prefers to have it as informal as the breakfast.

At either lunch or breakfast, when you pass hot muffins, bread, hot cakes, or pan-

cakes, always pass the butter on the same tray so that no one will have the disagreeable experience of a muffin almost cold before the butter reaches him.

I am afraid, Penelope, that you may think these directions that I give you for your maid are very detailed, but my experience with the untrained servant has taught me that you can never tell what unpleasant surprises she may give you in her way of serving your meals, if you have n't forestalled her by telling her every minutest detail. You can see that I think that with a maid of all work the breakfast and lunch should be very informal meals, and that with breakfast you should wait on yourselves after she has placed the main course on the table.

There is a very nice English contrivance for the breakfast and lunch table that I should think you would find con-

venient in the case of your maid of all work when you want to dispense with her services as much as possible. It is a small, low, revolving table to set in the middle of one's dining-table on which are placed muffins, butter, etc., and which by the slightest touch is made to move around so that anything on it comes in reach of all at the table. I have seen only handsome ones in mahogany, but I am sure they must come in other kinds of wood if that is not what your table is made of.

Another piece of furniture that I should think you would find useful is a "dinner wagon" — a tray on wheels that can be rolled from one room to another. After the family have left the table the maid can clear it much more quickly by using this tray to remove the things to the pantry.

I have n't said a word about your centerpiece, but I have a suggestion for that too! Ferns are very pretty for the center of the dinner table, but you will find it quite expensive to keep them always fresh, whereas if you plant some grapefruit seeds in a pot, you will have a charming little growing plant like a miniature orange tree with pretty glossy leaves which will last and give a very attractive air to your table.

I also think you will find candles for the dining-table cost too much for every day, but can be an additional touch when you have guests. I would n't advise you to try to follow every fashion on a small income. It will take away spontaneousness and give a strained feeling about what you do. No matter how rich you may become in the future, there will always be some one who has still more,

and is able to live more luxuriously, so cultivate independence of spirit if you want contentment. People who are always straining to have what they cannot afford, in order to keep up with those about them, can never be satisfied, and have nothing in the end but disappointed hopes.

Now, Penelope, dear, I have n't stopped to take breath since I started this letter, and I am tired, so no more until the next snag you may encounter. With the firm conviction that all your friends will try to vie with you in your good housekeeping,

Very affectionately yours,

Jane Prince.

CHAPTER VII · DUTIES OF SERVANTS

York Harbor, *September* 30.

My dear Penelope:

Since my last letter to you Eloise has begged me to write out the duties of three servants, — chambermaid, waitress and cook, — for a very inexperienced friend of hers, Hope Conroy, who is well off and expects to begin housekeeping soon; so you see what trouble my letters to you have brought on me! It occurred to me that you might like to have these notes for future reference when Tom has reached that pinnacle of success which we all predict for him, so I am enclosing a copy of them in this letter. You don't need them now, but why not tie all my letters on this subject together and make a book to keep, for easy reference, in a convenient place, — that top bureau drawer, for instance?

You remember meeting Hope Conroy, I am sure, when you were visiting us last year, and have probably heard that she is to be married next month. It has made Eloise, who is practical, and who simply adores her, quite unhappy that Hope seems to think it so amusing that she knows nothing about housekeeping. With all Eloise's brothers she has had a chance to understand men pretty well, and she thinks, with me, that there would be fewer divorces if young girls only knew how much a man cares for his comfort. So, in view of this, I felt I must yield to Eloise's request despite the amount of writing it entailed at a time when I was quite busy with other things. I think I have just barely alluded, in some of my letters to you, to my method of recording the servants' duties, but I know I have n't explained it at all so I will now

give you just what I wrote to Hope without any further comment:

Extract from my letter to Hope on the duties of three servants

It was after I had been married for several years and had become weary of recalling afresh for each new servant the details of her work in order to train her into my ways of doing it, that I decided to write a small blank book for each one of them, containing her daily duties, her weekly duties, the arrangement for her Sundays and her afternoons out — something that I could keep permanently and thus save myself much trouble. If you dislike detail as much as I do these books will help you too. When the servants first came I read them to each one letting each keep her own while she was with me and taking the precaution to have a copy of them all in my housekeeping book in case any misunderstanding should arise.

Realizing that much of the *general duties* must be different in every household, according to the number of the family and the number and arrangement of rooms, and whether they live

in an apartment house or not, I shall only attempt to give you an idea of how these books were written, just enough to help you make out your own books to suit the requirements of your family. This is the reason I describe the *general duties* only in a *general* way, and the *daily duties* (where the manner of doing the work is practically always the same) I describe in *detail*, addressing the maids directly as I did in the books which I made for my own servants. Although the instructions to the maids are in some cases identical, yet, in order to make them clear, I repeat them in each case, even though it seems unnecessary. It would be my advice to you in making your book to arrange the daily duties of the servants so as to insure the early starting of the household. For instance, let the chambermaid wake you on her way downstairs at a specified hour, and, at the same time, let the waitress come to get the silver. If you have a safe for your silver, you could leave out just enough for your breakfast and have it brought to your room at night so that she would stop and get it in the morning.

It is also a good plan to let the servants have

their breakfast before the family except in the case of a maid of all work, when this is almost impossible to arrange.

Then, about their Sundays, I think that church can't do us much good if we don't give the servants an opportunity to go, too, if they want to, or if we make it a hard day for them. Though it requires special arrangement, their Sundays should be made a day to look forward to with pleasure when each one can be sure of getting out, at some part of the day, to church, or to see her friends. The Sunday morning that the cook goes out, the lunch should be one that can be quickly cooked or her outing would be too short. In the case of the waitress and chambermaid, if, on their Sunday morning out, they waited to finish their work, they would get out so late, in most places, that it would n't be worth while to go at all. This explains why, in the plan that I shall give you, it is arranged that, on their Sunday mornings out, the chambermaid and waitress stop whatever work they are doing promptly at 10 A.M., and get ready to go out, the one who is *in* taking the work up where the other one has left it

and finishing it in addition to her own. You will also see that, with the following plan, you can take your choice of having late dinner every other Sunday (when the cook is at home) or every Sunday if your waitress is sufficiently expert and your cook prepares some of the dinner dishes before going out. Sometimes it is the chambermaid and sometimes the waitress that can cook best and likes the afternoon all to herself. It does n't matter which you choose for that duty; you simply use tact in this as in all your housekeeping.

As for giving them any freedom in the evenings I think you will find it a good plan to let the chambermaid and waitress alternate in going out, provided their services are not required; this insures one always being in the house so that the cook never has to go to the door. It is rather an understood thing that the cook can go out any evening after her regular work is done, of course, if her services are not required.

With regard to the cook's weekly duties I have never found that they could be laid down as definitely as those of the other servants on account of dinners and lunches com-

ing in, when all her time has to be devoted to the cooking. Therefore the washing and ironing (if it is done in the house), the weekly cleaning of the kitchen, the hall steps, etc., semiweekly cleaning of refrigerator and keeping the shelves and closets clean, all have to be fitted in when she can manage them. On this very account the mistress, in her morning visits to the kitchen, should look around carefully to be sure that nothing is neglected, for everything about a kitchen should be very clean if you want it to be sanitary.

Description of the chambermaid's book — Her general work

Under this head was told, in paragraphs, thus dividing the subjects so that they could be more easily seen and understood, what rooms, halls, stairs, etc., she had charge of, whether she made up the rooms of the other servants, washed her own clothes, bed-linen, etc., or had any of the duties of a lady's maid, such as mending, brushing, and taking out or putting away her master's and mistress's clothes, or washing their brushes and combs (which she can do if the family is small), or

polishing her mistress's boots. As to her neatness, — what she was expected to wear, and what her mistress provided her with, and about asking her mistress for anything needed in order to do her work well. The same instructions were given her about waiting on the door that were given the waitress, telling her that when workmen, inspectors, and such people had any work to do in her part of the house, she should accompany them around wherever they went.

Doing her work quietly and noiselessly was emphasized, especially the opening and shutting of blinds, windows, and doors, and just how a window should be opened top and bottom when airing a room, so that the hot air could go out above and the fresh cold air come in below, thus insuring good ventilation. It was impressed upon her that the doors of a room should be shut while the windows were open so as not to chill the rest of the house.

Her duty with regard to trays was described, —that when any member of the family was unable to come down to a meal she would be expected to take the tray up so that the meal of the family would not be disturbed by the

waitress leaving the table to do this; also that she would prepare and bring up breakfast trays where needed and that she should always hand anything on a tray, even if it were only a paper of pins. Her duty on the arrival of guests was explained: that she should be ready to carry their bags upstairs, but that she should not unpack their bags without asking if it was desired. It was made clearly understood that, when her mistress had guests to dinner, she was to assist in the pantry, and when there were many, she was to help in the dining-room and also to help departing guests on with their wraps when they left the house. That she was to do the duties of the waitress when the waitress was out was explained to her, so that she would perform them without awkwardness.

Her daily work

Be up early, throw mattress and bedclothes over the foot of your bed to air.

After dressing, open windows top and bottom in your room, put pillows near window to air, closing the door of your room and always of any room you are airing (if the

family is up) so as not to chill the rest of the house.

On your way downstairs open the windows in your halls top and bottom to air. If desired, wake your mistress at the time specified. Have your own breakfast.

If none of the family rooms are vacated when you have finished your breakfast, brush down the stairs and do up your own room; otherwise put all the family rooms to air, ending with guest room so that you can go right on with that room and finish it first.

When beginning a room draw back the curtains, pull the shades up to the top, open the windows top and bottom. Open closet doors and keep them open while room airs so that they won't get stuffy.

Shake pillows and put them near the window, but so they won't show from the street.

Put two chairs at foot of bed, draw blankets and sheets over them, turn the mattress over the foot of the bed so that the air can go over and under it.

Put soiled clothing in bag or basket provided for it.

Hang or fold and put away clothing or dresses.

If there has been a coal fire remove ashes, make fire up ready to light, wipe hearth; if a wood fire, leave the ashes.

Empty slops, if there is a wash-basin in the room, clean bathroom, washing tub and basin with hot water and soap or a cleanser, such as Dutch Cleanser, and dry them with a soft cloth.

Wash out soap-dish and other crockery and always see that there is soap in the dish. Wash bowl of w. c. with a stiff brush that comes for the purpose.

Dust chair and woodwork and see that there are no spots on the mirror. Remove soiled towels putting clean ones in their place. Take great care not to let anything go down the pipes that would clog them.

The bed having now had a chance to air, turn mattress over and make up bed.

If there are any scraps on the carpet, brush them up with dust pan and brush or carpet sweeper.

Dust furniture.

Empty scrap basket and put contents in bag to carry downstairs.

Shut windows, draw shades down halfway, and arrange curtains to hang smooth; then go to next room.

After the bedrooms are finished, begin the special weekly morning work for that day, sweeping rooms or cleaning bedrooms, silver, or brasses, or whatever it may be.

After the morning work is over, make yourself neat and be ready to assist at lunch table, if there are guests, or to go to the front door while waitress is serving lunch or dressing for the afternoon or is out or serving dinner.

In arranging the rooms for the night, first close the blinds, if desired, then draw down the shades, put soiled clothes in hamper, hanging up clothing in closets, putting back in its place anything that has been disarranged and leaving the room in order.

If there is a washstand in the room, remove waste water and fill pitchers.

If night pillows are used, remove day pillows and shams; if same pillows as day, take off shams, fold them carefully in their creases, and lay them where they will not get tumbled.

Remove bedspread, fold smooth. Open bed-

clothing, turning down the corner on one side, for one person or on both sides for two.

Lay night-clothes neatly folded on the turned-down corner, placing wrapper at the foot with slippers by it.

If there is company be ready to assist the waitress.

The weekly duties in detail, such as the thorough cleaning of each room, bathroom, halls, bedrooms, silver and brasses, also the Sunday arrangements and afternoons and evenings out, should appear here at the end of the chambermaid's book, but I cannot put it in for you, as it varies in different households and localities.

Description of the waitress's book — Her general work

Under this head she was told what rooms, halls, stairs, etc., she had charge of (so that there could be no discussion between the maids); also, if the vestibule was under her charge, she was reminded that, as the entrance is the first impression people get of a house, nothing will make them think

the waitress incompetent so quickly as an untidy vestibule and front hall, and that every morning the doormat should be shaken, the floor brushed clean, and the woodwork dusted; also the brasses rubbed up if they have become dull in between the weekly cleanings. It was made clear to her whether she made up her own room, washed her own clothes and bed-linen or aprons, or had any part in the family washing and ironing. Neatness in her work and person was spoken of — wearing checked gingham apron over her white one when doing such work as cleaning brasses and silver, so that if she had to go to the front door or answer any bell, she could slip it off easily and appear properly dressed with clean white apron; how necessary it was to have clean hands when waiting on the table and handling food; also about what she was expected to wear and what her mistress provided for her, and about asking her mistress for anything that she needed to do her work well.

Doing her work noiselessly was emphasized, especially opening and shutting blinds, windows, and doors, and how the windows should be opened top and bottom when airing to in-

sure good ventilation, and that the door of the room should be kept closed during this airing in order not to chill the rest of the house. She was reminded that the dining-room needed more airing than any other room and should be aired a few moments after every meal, and also that the crumbs under the table should be brushed up after each meal.

The use of a tray was explained to her: that only *small* articles should be handed and removed on a tray when *waiting on the table*, and that at other times she should always hand things on a tray, if it were only a paper of pins. That promptness was necessary in answering bells, especially the front doorbell, cautioning her as to whom she should let in and who should wait outside the door, and that when any workmen, inspectors, and such people had any work to do in the house she should accompany them around wherever they go in her part of the house, and if they should go to other parts of the house call the chambermaid or cook to accompany them; also that she should not allow anything to be taken out of the house unless she had been told to do so by some member of the family.

It was impressed on her that she must find out, *before going to the door*, whether her mistress was in or out, so as never to keep any one waiting, and that she should open the door wide to let visitors in and then stand back to allow them to precede her, carrying a tray to the door for the cards, and, if they have no cards, offering a pencil and pad, which should always be kept in the front hall, for name or message.

It was also impressed upon her that when waiting on the table she should not speak unless spoken to, except when having a message to deliver; and in case of an accident, such as dropping a knife, fork, or plate, she should pick it up and take it into the pantry, immediately replacing it with a fresh one. She was directed, should anything be dropped on the carpet to wipe it up at once, or if water or wine should be spilled on tablecloth, to dry it without a word, covering the spot with a fresh napkin. She was told that in case of a wine or fruit stain on tablecloth or napkins she should draw the spot tightly over a bowl, as soon after the meal as possible, while the stain was fresh, and pour *boiling* water through

it and thus remove the stain at once, and that the water must be really *boiling*, as hot water would only set the stain. She was also told how particular she should be when setting the table not to get finger marks on china, silver, or glass, and that if she should see holes in tablecloth or napkins she should call her mistress's attention to it before letting them go to the wash; that when the table was set she should see that no drawers or doors of sideboard or china closet were left open, to look disorderly, and also that it was her duty to see that the carving-knife was sharp and that plates used for a hot course should be warm, and for a cold course, cold.

Leaving her pantry in nice order after every meal was mentioned, and that she should not let soiled towels collect there, but every day wash out the towels, dish cloths, and mop and hang them up to dry, once a week thoroughly washing, scalding, and ironing them, always keeping fresh ones on hand to take the place of soiled ones.

The importance of letting the chambermaid know when she went upstairs to get dressed for the afternoon or to go out, and also of tell-

ing her at the same time what message was to be given at the door, so as not to keep any one waiting, was impressed on her.

She was told that she should rise when spoken to by any of the family or guests; also it was explained to her that she was to do the duties of the chambermaid when the chambermaid was out.

Her daily work

Be up early, throw mattress and bedclothes over the foot of your bed to air.

After dressing, open windows top and bottom in your room, put pillows near window to air, closing the door of your room and always of any room you are airing (if the family is up), so as not to chill the rest of the house.

On your way downstairs open windows top and bottom in the part of the house which is in your charge, closing them after your breakfast in time for the dining-room to get warm for the family breakfast.

Your breakfast being over, set the family breakfast table, and if there is not time for dusting before their breakfast, quickly put

back into place anything that has been put out of order the night before and make the room look comfortable.

If there has been a fire the night before, lay a fresh one ready to light and brush up the hearth.

Set the breakfast table, announce breakfast at the specified hour, and serve it.

When breakfast is over, wash all breakfast things and leave the pantry in perfect order.

Then begin the care of the rooms under your charge.

Pick up any scraps on carpet with carpet sweeper and go over the wooden floor with a dustless mop.

Dust window sills and all pieces of furniture, using two dust cloths, one to hold the furniture so that your hand will not leave a mark on it, and the other to dust with.

Empty scrap baskets and take contents downstairs.

If there are lamps, trim and clean them, wiping carefully the outside of the lamp and burner with damp cloth so that no oil will be left to make it smell.

Brush down stairs, holding dustpan under each step and wiping woodwork carefully.

Then begin the special morning work for that day, such as cleaning parlor, dining-room and pantry, silver, halls and library, or brasses.

This work should be accomplished in plenty of time to set the lunch table without hurry.

Announce lunch at the usual hour, and after it has been served and you have had your own and washed the lunch things, dress yourself for the afternoon in a neat black dress with fresh white apron and plain linen collar and be ready at three-thirty to wait on the door.

If you have n't had a chance before this, polish the steel knives with knife polish and board that comes for the purpose so that they will be bright for dinner.

Be ready to serve tea promptly in the afternoon if desired by your mistress.

As it gets dark, draw down the shades, light the regular lights that your mistress has specified, and set the table for dinner in time to do it nicely, announcing it at the appointed hour, waiting on it, and then taking your own dinner. After your dinner, remove whatever

is left on the table; take off, fold up, and put away tablecloth; wash the dishes, and leave pantry in nice order.

If there are no guests, take in the doormat, close and lock front door and any windows desired by your mistress, at the hour appointed by her.

Miscellaneous notes for the waitress
Washing dishes, etc.

In washing the dishes, always do the cleanest things first, in this order; glass, silver; then cups and saucers, plates, and other dishes. Empty every glass and cup, and scrape clean every plate or dish (with a plate scraper, that comes with a rubber edge and is consequently noiseless), before putting them in the water. Don't let pitchers or glasses stand with milk in them, but rinse them at once before putting them in the water so that it will be easy to wash them. Don't put many things into the water at a time or different kinds of things, such as teapot, sauce boat, and dinner plates; for the water will cool too quickly when so full and the plates will get chipped and spouts broken. Change the water frequently. When

washing the silver, always include trays in daily use even if they do not seem soiled. Use plenty of fresh very hot suds, and, after washing the silver well, put it on the drainer and pour boiling hot water over it. This heat will almost dry it, then rub *quickly* with clean dish-cloth and put all the pieces at once where they belong before they can get spattered; setting them down with a dish towel to prevent finger marks. This will keep the silver so bright that the weekly cleaning is a much easier matter. The china should be rinsed just as you have the silver, only not using such very hot water. Remember that silver and brasses cannot be made bright by slow rubbing, but that you must rub them briskly.

Care of the dining-table

If the dining-table has a high polish, be careful always to put a tile or tray or a linen mat lined with asbestos under anything that is hot, otherwise a bad spot will be made. If the table has an oil finish heat will not injure it and a damp cloth will remove any spot. Two or three times a week such a dining-table should be rubbed over well with a soft cloth

on which two or three drops of boiled linseed oil have been put. Too much oil will only make the table sticky and in condition to catch dust. But just a very little, rubbed in well, will, in time, give it a high polish of which you will be proud. These oiled rags are very dangerous to keep in the house, as they catch fire of themselves without any flame coming near them. Either keep them hanging on a clothes-line in the yard or else indoors in a metal box.

The weekly duties in detail, such as the thorough cleaning of dining-room, parlor, pantry, halls, silver, brasses, etc., and the Sunday arrangements and afternoons and evenings out, should appear here at the end of the waitress's book, but, as I said before, I cannot put it in for you because that is something you have to arrange for yourself.

Description of the cook's book
Her general work

Under this head the cook was told definitely just what rooms, closets, halls, steps, etc., she was expected to clean ; whether she was ex-

pected to put any coal on the furnace or look after its drafts between the visits of the furnace man; whether she had any washing and ironing to do; how careful she should be to scrub out every part of the refrigerator once or twice a week with soda and hot water, household ammonia, or some such thing, airing it well afterwards and taking the opportunity before a fresh piece of ice was put in thoroughly to clean out the ice compartment; also the drain pipe for that compartment with a brush that comes especially for this; also that she should be careful to empty the pan under the refrigerator frequently to prevent its overflowing and rotting the floor; that the milk and butter should be kept in a compartment by themselves, and no food with strong odor, such as pineapples or melons, be put in the refrigerator with it as their flavor would be absorbed by the milk and butter which would taste bad in consequence; also that no hot food or articles wrapped in paper should be put into the refrigerator. She was cautioned not to let any scraps get into the sink pipes, but to scrape clean all plates, pots, or dishes after each meal, into a strainer kept for the

purpose in the corner of the sink and frequently emptied into the garbage, and that once a week she should wash down the pipes with boiling water and lye. She was reminded that the kitchen towels should be washed in hot suds every day and thoroughly boiled once a week; that the pudding-bags or any straining-cloths should be washed after each using and put away dry and clean.

It was especially impressed upon her to keep the dumb waiter shut and any door that would allow the kitchen odors to get into the house.

The signals to the waitress during the serving of the meals were explained to her (for instance, one bell for taking course off the range, two bells to send to pantry) to prevent delay between courses; also she was told that hot food should be served on a warm platter and cold food on a cold one. In order to serve the meals promptly on time, she was reminded to see every day whether her clock agreed with her master's. The fact that the ovens would not bake well unless the flues of the range were cleared at least once a week of all ashes, and that this should be done in the morning

before the range fire was hot, was explained to her ; also that when a hot fire was not needed for immediate use the dampers and drafts should be closed to prevent waste of coal and kindlings. She was cautioned not to waste anything, but to lay aside all left-over food for her mistress to see and decide about ; also not to use the nice china when putting food away in the refrigerator, for fear it might get broken. The importance of being neat and clean both in her cooking and person, washing her hands before handling food, and wearing neat cotton aprons and dresses was emphasized. She was told that no visitors should be allowed in the kitchen during meals and that she should not let workmen, etc., go into the house except by permission of her mistress and accompanied by one of the other maids whom she should notify ; also that the responsibility of keeping the outside kitchen door and gate locked was hers as well as the locking-up of her department at night.

Her daily work

On getting up, throw mattress and bedclothes over the foot of your bed to air.

After dressing, open windows top and bottom in your room, putting pillows near window to air and closing the door of your room so as not to chill the house.

Have the range fire going in time to have plenty of hot water for the family baths.

The range fire burning brightly, prepare the maids' breakfast (if that comes first) and put the family cereal on to cook during your meal and anything else that requires long cooking.

Cook the family breakfast.

After both breakfasts are over, put the kitchen in order and be ready to take your mistress's orders for the day, going with her to the ice-chest and showing her the left-overs there and in the wire safe.

When your mistress comes into the kitchen, rise and remain standing while she is there.

When her visit is over, make your first duty the preparing and serving of food well and on time, the other duties being fitted in between, till the last meal is over and the time has come to arrange the kitchen for the night, when you should put away all food in the refrigerator or wire safe, wipe the tables off,

brush up the hearth, and leave nothing to attract mice or water-bugs or near enough the stove to catch fire.

If the range fire is made new every day, place kindlings, coal, and paper in a convenient place ready for use before going to bed, to avoid delay in the morning, and before leaving the kitchen see that all windows, doors, and gates in your department are securely locked.

Miscellaneous notes for cook — Making the range fire if it is never allowed to go out

About half an hour before leaving the kitchen for the night, put coal on, open the drafts, and, when the fire is hot, fill up well with coal, then check the drafts and leave them checked so that the fire will smoulder all night. In the morning, open the drafts, shake down the grate, put on a little kindling and fresh coal, and the fire will burn brightly in a short time.

Making the range fire if started fresh every morning

Shake the ashes out thoroughly, picking out pieces of coal only partly burned to be

used again and putting ashes in ash can to be taken away. Put loose rolls of paper in, then kindlings laid crosswise and far enough apart for a draft of air to go through freely, then light the papers, turning the dampers to make a draft. When the kindlings are burning well, put the coal on in small quantities at first, adding more when this is well started.

Before starting the first fire after the house has been closed, burn newspapers in the range to warm the chimney and thus prevent its smoking by starting an upward draft.

Sunday arrangements, also afternoons and evenings out in detail, should come here.

Suggestion for Arrangement of Servants' Sundays

First Sunday — Morning

Cook is in, gets lunch and prepares as much of the dinner as she can.

Waitress is out from 10 A.M. till time to wash lunch dishes.

Chambermaid is in and in addition to her own work does any of the waitress's work that is left unfinished after 10 A.M. and serves lunch.

Afternoon

Cook is out, after she has washed up lunch things, till 11 P.M.

Waitress is in, prepares and serves dinner.

Chambermaid is out, after she has served lunch, till 11 P.M.

Second Sunday — Morning

Cook is out, after washing up breakfast things, till time to cook lunch.

Waitress is in, and in addition to her own work, does any chamberwork left unfinished after 10 A.M.

Chambermaid is out after 10 A.M. till her lunch time.

Afternoon

Cook is in. Cooks dinner.

Waitress is out, after she has washed lunch dishes, till 11 P.M.

Chambermaid is in and serves dinner.

The third Sunday is like the first.

The fourth Sunday is like the second.

And so it goes on in twos, each servant having every other Sunday morning out and every other Sunday afternoon and evening out.

Well, Penelope dear, I had almost forgotten I was writing to you, these extracts from my letter to Hope have become so voluminous! It is fortunate that they need no comment, for I could not write another line, since it is the middle of the night and I am perfectly exhausted and disgracefully sleepy.

Very affectionately your devoted friend,

Jane Prince.

CHAPTER VIII · BEHIND THE SCENES AT A DINNER

Penelope Pennington!

What is this that you tell me! *You* are to have charge of a formal dinner for your Aunt Sally! How perfectly dear it is of her to give one to Mr. and Mrs. Winslow in appreciation of Tom's promotion. I have been to many of your aunt's dinners in the past and know how smoothly she will want everything to go, so I am not surprised at your excitement at the thought of making all the arrangements for her, and I am very glad that she feels strong enough to be present herself. I understand from your letter that you do not wish for a menu, as you want to choose that yourself, or for any directions about wines, as you can find all that in cookery books, but you do want to know about preparations "be-

hind the scenes," as it were, to make everything go like clockwork. First, foremost, and last I am evidently to drop everything and write you at once! Do you realize, dear child, that I am off, in a few days, on that motor trip through the Berkshires about which I wrote you? But since it is for *you*, I will stop my preparations for a little and write this if it takes me all night!

To set a household like your aunt's going for such an affair, after it has been shut off from social life for so long, is almost like starting with untrained servants, so I shall give you directions in minute detail. Since you can't tell yet whether it is to be a dinner of eight or twelve, I will write a description for one of eight complete and then describe in general terms the difference between the two.

It will be delightful to engineer the dinner without a moment's worry about expense, knowing that your aunt is so perfectly well able to afford it. People who make such attempts when they cannot afford it deserve all the worry that they suffer. Others always know that they are attempting something beyond their means and they lose, in a measure, the respect of the very people whom they have tried to impress. About the only difference from one's everyday dinner is that nothing is served on the table and the courses are more in number, and it is well to impress this on the minds of your aunt's servants. Don't let the thought of a dinner mean only hard work to them, but let them feel sure of having plenty of ice-cream, cake, candy, etc., afterwards, so that there can be a festive feeling downstairs as well as up.

There is a good deal of extra work, and also late hours, in connection with a dinner of this kind and the servants deserve some encouragement and reward.

Several days before the dinner make out the menu from the dishes that the cook makes the best, not attempting anything new. Give her confidence by consulting her a little, and also encourage her by praising the way she cooks these special dishes, at the same time cautioning her on the necessity of great care on such an occasion and of keeping her reputation up. See that she has the proper kitchen utensils needed in good order for use. Then go over each dish in a good receipt book putting down on a writing-pad exactly what is needed for each course, how much milk, butter, eggs, cream, seasoning, vegetables, meat, etc.

Your menu having been decided upon with the cook, then go over, with the waitress, the china, glass, silver, etc., to see if there are eight of everything unbroken for each course. Jot down on a memorandum what broken pieces, if any, have to be replaced. Go over the silver and decide how you will use that. Don't make a great undertaking of this, but do it quickly. It won't take long. Decide, at this time, what flowers you will have and what color scheme, and see if the candle shades are in good order and that there are enough candles. Once having done all this, should your aunt want you to take charge of a dinner for her again, the waitress, if she is reliable, can do this part herself and report to you if anything is needed. See that the broken china and glass are replaced several days before the dinner.

Now that you have decided on the menu, and what china, glass, silver, and candle shades you intend using, you can write out the directions for the waitress for serving the dinner, putting opposite each course what plates and platters you want used for that course and have these directions ready to pin up in the pantry. I cannot say too much about getting everything off your mind that you can the day before the dinner. On this day, in order to keep the cook calm, see for yourself that all the necessary articles, except very perishable ones, are in the house, and have her prepare the clear soup and anything else that she can on that day. Take this time to tell her (or to show her pictures from cookery books) how you like to have the dishes decorated, and also remind her that one signal (or bell) from the pantry means to dish up

and keep a course hot, and two signals (or bells) to send it up to the pantry, and caution her how a few minutes' delay in the kitchen seems a long time in the dining-room, so she has to be quick. Write out the menu very clearly for her and pin it up in the kitchen, and then decide on the platters and dishes to be used. In fact, have all your conversation with her about the dinner the day before. Write the place cards. (Plain blank cards are dignified and answer the purpose just as well as fancy, elaborate ones which are expensive, and the money saved can go toward pretty flowers that will really add to the beauty of the table and the pleasure of the guests.) Find out the day before the dinner just how your aunt wishes the guests to be seated and write this down, so that it will only take a moment when the table is set to

put the cards at their proper places. (Of course Mr. and Mrs. Winslow being the guests of honor, Tom will take in Mrs. Winslow, who will sit at his right, and Mr. Winslow will take your aunt in and sit at her right.) At the same time address the little envelopes that come for the purpose, one for each man guest, and slip into them the card with the name of the lady he is to take in to dinner. Keep all these things in a sideboard drawer to be on hand when you want them.

In the case of this first formal dinner with your aunt's present servants, you will have to be on the spot most of the morning if you want to take a rest in the afternoon. You can give the dining-room up to the dinner that day and lunch at a side-table or in the library. After your short interview of encouragement with

the cook, you read to the waitress and chambermaid the directions for serving the dinner and see that they understand their parts in it, and try to make them ambitious that everything should go well and be a credit to them. You then pin these directions up in the pantry. These directions can be used for many dinners until they are worn out. After this you superintend putting on the under-pad and then the tablecloth which must be very smooth. The chambermaid must help the waitress, as it takes two to put on a large cloth without mussing it. Watch the waitress put the eight plates around the table, to be sure they are evenly spaced (two on each side, if the table is wide enough; otherwise with eight there must be a gentleman at the head and another at the foot in order not to have two gentlemen or two ladies side by side).

Next have the waitress set one place completely, under your directions, with small silver, glasses, and napkins as in the family dinner (only more, as the courses require[1]), so that she can set all the places like it without your being there to direct her. Leave her to put fresh candles in the candlesticks, and a final polish on the china, silver, and glass that are to be used during the dinner, while you arrange the flowers. No matter how nicely any one keeps house, there is a great deal for the servants to think of for a dinner, and as they have never served one for you before, should you get the impression in the morning that things are not going on very well, you will have to

[1] If you don't like so many forks and knives on the table at once, put enough for the first three courses, and have the others brought on with the plates of each course as in the case of dessert.

be in the dining-room a good deal, quietly seeing that no time is lost.

After the lunch things have been cleared off and the servants have had their lunch, you superintend the setting of the side-table with the extra things that will be needed during the dinner, such as the plates for cold courses, any small silver that may be needed, a plate for the extra bread and rolls, and all the plates for the last course, on each of which is a doily, and a finger bowl one third full of water. All these things should be prettily arranged in a symmetrical manner, and if there is n't room on the side-table some can go on the sideboard, as they must all be convenient.

After the side-table is set, you can go with the waitress into the pantry and have her send down to the kitchen all platters, dishes, etc., that are to be served from

there and arrange, in a corner of the pantry out of the way and in piles, the plates for the different courses, putting on each pile a slip of paper telling what course it is for, so that the servants won't get confused. See that the tray of after-dinner coffee-cups is arranged in the pantry with a spoon on each saucer, and with the sugar tongs on the bowl of sugar. Then go and rest and come down later when the waitress reports to you that she has finished setting the dining-table. You will probably find that it does n't look to your satisfaction, but don't put the servants out of temper with criticisms. Take it for granted that they have done their best, speak well of what is right, and straighten out what is wrong with explanations, giving the finishing touches yourself. Then should your aunt give any more dinners under your supervision,

her servants could do most of this themselves. After the dinner is over, and the guests are gone, be generous in your praise to the servants of everything that went well and wait for another time to show how to correct any mistakes that were made. They will probably go to bed very tired that night, but happy because they have pleased you.

Here are the details for the dinner: —

When you post your written directions in the pantry, it is well to underline the *waitress's* with red pencil, the *chambermaid's* with blue, so that each can see at a glance where her duty comes in.

The signals to be used to send the courses up at a dinner have to be carefully understood beforehand between the servants in the dining-room and kitchen. Generally it gives the cook about the

right time if, when the first guest has finished, the chambermaid rings one bell for her to dish and keep the course hot, and when more than half the guests have finished, two bells to send to the pantry. This depends, however, so much on the quickness of the servants, etc., that they have to learn gradually, by experience, the proper time interval between bells. The standard of perfection to aspire to, is no waiting between courses and no hurrying during courses.

After the first two courses I will give you but few details, because in serving every course the following general method is to be observed: —

The same signs and signals are passed at the proper time between waitress, chambermaid, and cook for removing and bringing on every course.

In *every* course where there is a main

dish and two other dishes, the chambermaid (after having taken all the soiled plates from the waitress and in return given her all the fresh ones) gives the main dish to the waitress and then follows her all around the table with a dish in each hand offering first one, then the other, to every guest.

Soiled plates are *always* replaced with fresh ones from the *right* side of each person, and all foods are *always* offered on the *left* side. The lady on the *right* of the host is served first.

During *every* course, where there is but *one thing* to pass, the chambermaid remains in the pantry, handing out and taking in plates and keeping the pantry in order.

One course is *always* entirely removed into the pantry before another course is brought on.

Let us take the following dinner as an example:—

First course, canapé.
Second course, soup.
Third course, fish.
Fourth course, entrée.
Fifth course, roast and two vegetables.
Sixth course, salad, etc.
Seventh course, ices and cakes.
Eighth course, candies.
Ninth course, coffee.

You can omit either canapé or entrée or both if you prefer.

Dinner of Eight served by Three Servants

Directions for the two dining-room servants

Fifteen minutes before the hour for dinner, the chambermaid, in neat black dress, with cap, plain white collar and cuffs, and apron, all immaculately clean and fresh, sees that the lights are lighted in the dressing-room, and stands ready to help the ladies off with their wraps. When they have all arrived and

have left the dressing-room, she turns down the light and goes right to the dining-room ready to help the waitress.

Fifteen minutes before the hour for dinner, the waitress, after having lighted the lights on the parlor floor and in the front hall stands at the front door watching to open it promptly to prevent any guest from having to ring the bell. She helps the gentlemen off with their coats, hangs up their hats, places their canes in the rack, and hands them the tray on which the card envelopes have been placed. When all the guests have arrived, the chambermaid signals the cook this fact, then fills the glasses with iced water, while the waitress lights the candles on the dining-table. Then both bring in quickly the plates of canapé, placing them on the serving plates already at each place.

The chambermaid then goes into the pantry. When this is done, the waitress gives a last look to see that nothing has been forgotten and that the candles are all burning well, and goes quietly into the parlor and says in a low voice, "Dinner is served, Mrs. ——."

First course — canapé[1]

which is on the table when the guests come into the dining-room. When the first guest has finished this course, the waitress makes a silent sign to the chambermaid, who is in the pantry, and she signals to the cook (one bell), which means that the next course is to be dished up and kept hot. When more than half of the guests have finished, the waitress makes a silent sign to the chambermaid again, who signals (two bells) to the cook, which means to send up the

Second course — soup

When the soup comes into the pantry the chambermaid fills all the plates half full and hands a plate to the waitress, who comes to the pantry door for it. The waitress takes the plate in her *right* hand and goes to the *right* side of the lady on the *right* of the host,[2] and picking up the used canapé plate with her *left*

[1] This can be brought in after the guests are seated, like the other courses, if preferred.

[2] Many people have everything passed first to the hostess. This is a matter of taste.

hand, replaces it, on the serving plate, with the plate of soup. She then watches and, as each guest finishes, she replaces the canapé plate with a plate of soup, the chambermaid standing inside the pantry door ready to take the used plate and to hand her the soup plate. As soon as all have soup, the waitress passes any accompaniment, on a small tray, all around the table, while the chambermaid remains in the pantry to straighten and keep it in order.

Third course — fish in ramekins on individual plates

This is brought on and served the same as the soup, but in removing it the waitress replaces each fish plate with an empty hot plate, and then the

Fourth course — the entrée

is brought on by the waitress who holds the casserole or platter with both hands under it and passes it in regular order all around the table. This course having been removed and fresh hot plates having replaced the used ones, the

Fifth course — the roast

is brought on. The waitress passes the roast all around the table and the chambermaid follows with a dish of vegetables in each hand, which she offers on the *left* side of each person in turn till all have been served. Anything else in this course is passed all around in the same way by the chambermaid. If the dish is large, it should be carried in her hands; if small, on a tray. The waitress then watches to fill glasses and pass rolls. Having done this, the chambermaid returns to the pantry and when the roast course has been removed and fresh plates have been substituted for used ones, she hands the waitress the

Sixth course — the salad

following her all around the table with whatever accompaniment there may be and then returning to the pantry. In removing this course the waitress takes two plates at a time, one in each hand (*never* on top of each other), and does not replace them with other plates. When this course is completely removed, the waitress brings a tray and, going around the

table, takes off peppers and salts and any small silver or knives that are left there, and takes them to the pantry, being very careful not to make the slightest noise. The chambermaid follows with a folded napkin and silver tray and removes the crumbs. Then the chambermaid returns to the pantry, and the waitress, bringing in each hand a dessert plate with fork and spoon on it, places them in turn before each person, setting them down from the right side. She then takes the dessert platter from the chambermaid in the pantry and brings on the

Seventh course — dessert

and passes it all around the table, the chambermaid following with cake. When this course is removed and the dessert plates are replaced by plates with finger-bowls, the waitress passes the

Eighth course — candy

placing the little dishes of different kinds on a tray. While the guests are at this course the chambermaid sees that the fire in the parlor burns brightly and the lights are all turned

up, and when all have finished dinner and have gone into the parlor, she passes the coffee and cigars to the gentlemen in the dining-room or library, while the waitress passes the coffee to the ladies in the parlor. When the gentlemen, after smoking, join the ladies in the parlor, the waitress passes, on a tray, glasses which she fills with ice-cold Apollinaris or White Rock, and offers to each guest. When the guests are about to leave, the waitress, on the first signal of the parlor bell, goes to the front door to help the gentlemen on with their coats, hand them their canes and hats, and open the front door, while the chambermaid is in the dressing-room ready to help the ladies on with their wraps.

Special notes for chambermaid at dinner of eight

After having helped the waitress put the canapé on the table, return to the pantry, where your duties are:

To signal the cook when signed by the waitress to do so.

To keep the pantry from getting into confusion, by piling used plates out of the way and sending platters down to the kitchen.

To be ready to take used plates from the waitress instantly and hand her the ones for the next course, and where there is more than one dish served at a course to hand the main dish to the waitress and follow her into the dining-room with the lesser dishes, passing them around just after the waitress and then returning to the pantry.

To see that the plates are warm for hot courses and cold for cold ones.

To follow the waitress when she is removing salts and peppers, and take up the crumbs.

To go into the parlor while the guests are at the last course and see that the fire burns brightly and that the lights are turned up.

To return to the pantry, and when coffee comes up to pour it into the cups and give one tray to the waitress to serve the ladies and take the other yourself to the gentlemen.

To help the waitress wash up the dishes after the dinner.

To answer the doorbell should it ring while dinner is being served.

To be ready on the first signal of the parlor bell to go into the ladies' dressing-room and help them on with their wraps.

Dinner of twelve

Should the dinner turn out to be one of twelve instead of eight, it will make a difference in your arrangements, because, while the preparations made before and after the actual dinner are identical with those made for a dinner of eight, yet certain changes are necessary in the service; namely, the chambermaid should be relieved that day from doing her weekly cleaning, and, as soon as the bedrooms are finished, she should help either the cook or waitress as they may need her; also some one will be required in the kitchen to assist the cook, and some one to come about half an hour before the dinner to stay in the pantry and do there what the chambermaid did in the dinner of eight, except that she does not come out of the pantry during the dinner, and

therefore the two waiting on the table are not obliged to go into the pantry. The courses are passed and removed in the same way as in the dinner of eight, except that there are two to do it instead of one, and therefore to avoid collision it is well for one to take one side of the table and the other the other side, in the courses where this is possible. In the case of the entrée or dessert, two platters are often used to make it go quicker, the waitress beginning with the lady on the right of the host and ending with the hostess and the chambermaid beginning with the guest on the right of the hostess and ending with the host. After the dessert all the arrangements are the same as in a dinner for eight.

Directions for the maid in the pantry at a dinner of twelve

Fifteen minutes before the dinner, go into the pantry, shut the door, and fill the sink with hot water, so that in case you need to rinse anything off during the dinner you can do it without noise. Remember that every sound can be heard in the dining-room, so be very careful not to make the slightest noise in handling the silver and china and to move the dumb waiter up and down very quietly and slowly. Be ready, when the waitress hands you the plates that have been used, to hand her back instantly the fresh plates for the next course till all are handed out, and to ring one bell to signal the cook the first time the waitress makes a sign to you to do it, and two bells the second time she gives you this sign. When you have handed all the plates out for a course, give out the main dish for that course at once, handing immediately afterwards the dishes that go with the course; as, for example, fresh hot plates first, then the roast, followed quickly with the two vegetables, always put-

ting on each platter and in the vegetable dishes the necessary spoons, forks, or knives. Remember that hot dishes must have warm plates and cold dishes cold ones.

As soon as you receive from the waitresses the platters and dishes of any finished course, send them down to the kitchen and occupy any time that you have, while a course is going on in the dining-room, in piling plates out of the way in order not to have them litter up the pantry where you will need all the space you can get during the dinner. Don't let this or anything else interfere with handing a course promptly. When the coffee comes up from the kitchen, fill all the cups on the two trays and hand them to the waitresses.[1]

I am afraid, Penelope, that you will think there is a great deal of detail in these dinner directions, but my own dislike of detail is just what leads me to write it out so fully for you, so that you

[1] It is best to have the soup sent from the kitchen to the pantry in a pitcher, as it keeps hotter and can be more quickly poured into plates.

can have it on paper, in your housekeeping book, instead of keeping it in your mind. My experience, too, is that you cannot be too explicit when instructing servants to whom you are not accustomed, and these very details, once written out and left for them to consult, will enable you to make all your preparations for other dinners with ease before the day and leave you on that day free to pay your visits and lead your normal life, only coming in toward the end of the afternoon to make a final inspection to see that everything is right. You can see how confident I am that your aunt, once having felt the pleasure of opening her house again, will want to do it frequently.

What a variety of subjects we have been over together in these letters! I

can't imagine what next you can ask me unless it be advice on the management of a young and attractive husband, and happily I shall escape that by flight! Don't imagine, Penelope, dear, that I think I have smoothed out the whole domestic situation for you, for I cannot do much more than try to give you principles to work on, hoping that you and your bright young women friends will discuss it rationally together in order that you may meet the problem more wisely and broadly and in a more human spirit than our generation has done. The world moves and we must move along with it, but we can have no better rule to go by in facing *any* conditions than the one given us over nineteen hundred years ago, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them."

Au revoir, dear; think of my actually being able to go off on a pleasure trip! You can imagine how full of excitement I am over it, for I could n't have done this a year ago, and could n't now if it were n't for my delightful relatives who are making everything so smooth and easy for me.

Au revoir, love to Tom and success to that exciting dinner. I shall hope to hear all about it when I come back.

Very affectionately yours,

Jane Prince.

THE END

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